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WASHINGTON, D. C.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 1858.

A NIGHT SESSION—SCENES IN THE HOUSE—NATURE OF THE STRUGGLE.

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE ON THE LEOPOLTON CONSTITUTION.

The reader will not overlook the President's Message, urging upon Congress the recognition of the Leopoldton Constitution, and the admission of Kansas into the Union under it. It has already undergone severe criticism in that body, and its misrepresentations will hardly deceive anybody, well-informed in relation to Kansas affairs, and disposed to do justice to its people.

All that the President says of the rebellion of the Free State Party may be disposed of in a few words. The struggle in Kansas, he says, is between those who are loyal to "the Territorial Government established by Congress," and those who are in rebellion against it. As to the character of the Convention that formed it, the manner in which it was organized, its proceedings, or the expression of the popular will concerning it—these were subjects with which Congress had nothing to do: the President and his supporters wanted no investigation! On the other hand, the Republicans and the supporters of Mr. Douglas insisted upon a full preliminary investigation, so as to ascertain whether the Constitution was or was not a fair expression of the will of the people of the Territory.

Mr. Hughes, of Indiana, who had the floor on the question of reference, bearing that Mr. Harris, of Illinois, intended to move a reference of all the papers to a select committee, with instructions to investigate and report, thought to anticipate the movement, and keep the measure under the control of the Party, by moving simply a reference to a select committee, omitting instructions—and by usage, too, be entitled to be appointed chairman.

Mr. Harris, however, obtained the floor subsequently, and moved to amend the resolution of reference.

"That the message of the President, enclosing the Constitution formed at Leopoldton, in the Territory of Kansas, by a Convention of delegates thereof, and the papers accompanying the same, be referred to a select committee of fifteen, to be appointed by the Speaker, and that the committee be instructed to inquire into all the facts connected with the formation of said Constitution, and the laws under which the same was originated, and into such facts and proceedings as have occurred since the formation of said Constitution, having reference to the question of the propriety of the admission of said Territory into the Union under said Constitution, and whether it is acceptable to the majority of the legal voices of Kansas; and that said committee have power to send for persons and papers."

On this he demanded the previous question, thus excluding all idle debate. Mr. Stephen, of Georgia, seemed to think this was taking him by surprise, and forthwith the Administration Party, feeling its weakness, commenced a war of parliamentary expedients to stave off a vote, and compel an adjournment. The Opposition, well disciplined in trials of endurance, entered warmly into the struggle, and on the first motion to adjourn, cast 112 votes, against 95 given for it. The struggle was continued, without debate, four or five hours, the yeas and nays being called without number on all sorts of idle questions, moved by Administration need; but the Opposition was inflexible, betraying no indication of impatience or yielding.

Midnight came, and still the voting went on. Between 10 and 11 o'clock, an outbreak suddenly occurred, for a few moments threatening a general conflict.

Mr. Brown, of Pennsylvania, passing down to aisle on the Administration side of the House, hearing General Quitman, of Mississippi, announce his desire to offer a proposition, cried out, "I object!" Mr. Keitt, of South Carolina, who was near him, said to him, "Go to your own side of the House, and object." Mr. Brown replied, "This is a free hall, and I shall object wherever I please!" and he passed on the aisle before the Speaker's chair. Here he was met by Mr. Keitt, who had passed down another aisle, and who "asked him, 'what he meant by such an answer?'" Just as Mr. Keitt said, "this is a free hall, and I shall object wherever I please!" "I'll let you know," said Mr. Keitt, trying to take Mr. Brown by the throat. Mr. Brown struck his hand up, but Mr. Keitt repeated, "I'll let you know, you Black Republican puppy!" and Mr. Keitt will let you know," said Mr. Brown, "that no negro-driver in this hall shall crack his whip over me!" All the words that had passed between them were quietly spoken, so as to attract no general attention. No sooner had Mr. Brown replied, than Mr. Keitt sprang towards him, and a second time tried to seize him by the throat; but this time Mr. Brown knocked him down. In an instant he was surrounded by Southerners, and at the same moment, C. C. Washburn, E. B. Washburn, Mr. Potter of Wisconsin, and other Republican members, and hearing that Mr. Brown would be injured, rushed to the rescue, and a conflict ensued, which was quickly over.

Mr. Brown, of Mississippi, was the first to sustain the blow, and Mr. Keitt, trying to

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